

FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Federal Communications Commission
FROM: Kevin Supple 
DATE: September 9, 2008
RE: CC Docket No. 02-06

The Francis Howell R-III School District strongly supports the proposed addition of "telephone broadcast messaging" to the list of services eligible for support under the schools and libraries ("E-rate") program.

Communication between and among educators, students, and parents plays a vital role in improving educational performance in elementary and secondary schools. Telephone broadcast messaging offers districts a means of contacting parents regarding absent or truant students, thereby facilitating increased classroom attendance. Telephone broadcast messaging also can be used to notify and inform parents of testing schedules, parent/teacher conferences, and to otherwise increase participation by parents in their children's education.

A further and significant benefit of telephone broadcast messaging is that it can provide an important emergency response resource in the event of weather-related events, health or other civil emergencies, or other incidents that require schools to lock down or transfer students to safe locations.

In enacting the E-rate program in 1996, Congress recognized that many schools and libraries have limited resources that constrain their access to emerging technologies that can enhance and support their educational mission. Telephone broadcast messaging, which allows schools to more efficiently and effectively communicate with students and parents, is a prime example of such an emerging technology and should be included within the E-rate program's list of eligible services.

I urge your support for the proposed addition of telephone broadcast messaging to the list of eligible E-rate services.